

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
Mayor's Meritorious Service Awards	1
Community Spotlight	2
Help Make Our City Beautiful	2
Visit <i>Amistad</i>	2
District Activities	3
Community News	3
Upcoming Events	3

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Message from the Mayor

At the State of the District address on March 5, I laid out a vision for the future of our city. I spoke about the accomplishments we have made. We've gone from a \$500 million deficit to balanced budgets five years in a row. We ended the Control Board era and brought back receiverships into DC government. We brought the homicide rate to its lowest level in 15 years; we created 5,000 new jobs last year; and, we are bringing quality care to almost 20,000 citizens.

The past year has been a difficult one in many ways, with the shocks of September 11 and anthrax setting back our tourism-related businesses and draining revenue from our city. The good news for the District is that we ended FY 2001 with a surplus of \$77 million and a fund balance of \$562 million. Compared to many of our neighboring jurisdictions, we are in an enviable position.

For next year, however, we face a budget gap of roughly \$200 million. The Fiscal Year 2003 Proposed Budget closes that gap in a responsible and sensible way by controlling government spending; investing in neighborhoods and key city services; and postponing some new additional cuts until we can afford them, while providing strategic relief in a few critical areas.

At the same time we control spending, we are continuing to invest in critical services according to the priorities you outlined at the Citizen Summit.

Those priorities include a \$122 million increase for public schools, a \$3.2 million increase for UDC, a \$1.5 million increase for college financial aid, and a \$21 million increase for the Child and Family Services Agency.

I agree with the Council that we should do whatever we can to reduce the tax burden for citizens and businesses. My proposed budget takes a balanced approach to tax relief, suspending new personal income tax cuts until we can accommodate them in a responsible manner.

However, I am proposing a prospective trigger mechanism that will allow these suspended tax cuts to resume when economic conditions become more favorable. And I am supporting the planned reduction in the franchise tax, and the property tax cap that limits annual increases in property taxes to a maximal 25%.

Let's not forget, though, that the major reason why we have to sacrifice so much to balance our revenues and expenditures is because Congress places restrictions on our revenue collection that no other state must bear.

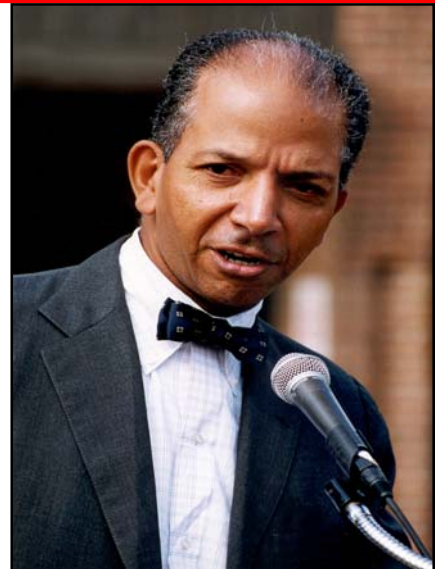
I believe, however, that this year holds real promise for change. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton has introduced legislation designed to provide some relief. The best thing that we can do to support her legislation is to demonstrate to Congress our ability to make the sacrifices needed to maintain fiscal balance. And I believe our budget does that, while still providing the key services citizens need to keep the District strong.

Mayor's Meritorious Service Awards

On March 14, in conjunction with the DC Chamber of Commerce, I presented the Mayor's Meritorious Service Awards to individuals from the District's fire, police and emergency teams who performed special acts of bravery during the past year.

These people are the heroes who responded with courage, strength, and compassion on September 11. However, what is even more remarkable is that they respond that way every day — whether it's rescuing a drowning man from a river, saving citizens from burning buildings, or tracking down criminals and bringing them to justice.

Every day, they place their lives on the line to safeguard the neighborhoods of our city and to save the lives of people who often never even have the opportunity to thank them. On behalf of the residents of our city, I am proud to thank these individuals for their service to our city and our country.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

[Advisory Neighborhood Commission](#)

Community Spotlight

Regina Upchurch is one of the most active people in her Parkview community, according to Lidia Orellana, DC's Community Services Representative for Ward 1. "When I call her to ask her to help me with something, she never says 'no'," said Lidia.

As ANC Commissioner 1A, one of Regina's recent projects was making sure that the children who would be displaced by the temporary closing of the Parkview Recreation Center would have someplace to go after school and during the summer while the center's much-needed renovations were taking place. At Regina's suggestion, ANC 1A adopted a resolution urging that the childcare program be temporarily relocated to Parkview Elementary School where there is some extra space.



Regina Upchurch

Regina also helps seniors in her neighborhood who are living alone by getting them signed up for programs such as Meals on Wheels or driving them to the grocery store or even hiring people to shovel their snow during harsh winters.

Regina has also done a lot to try to solve a number of issues along Georgia Avenue including helping to ensure that the anti-loitering laws are enforced, and trying to resolve some difficult parking issues. When Mayor Williams toured the area, she was present, pointing out ways that the agencies of the government could work together to enhance the area.

The motto Regina chose for her mail order business mirrors her thinking as a community activist: "A goal setter will succeed! A procrastinator does not achieve!"

Reminder: Help Make Our City Beautiful

Along with members of the City Council, I plan to kick off the Great American Cleanup on March 30 at 9:30 a.m. at the 2900 block of Georgia Avenue NW (between the 600 block of Columbia Road, NW and the 600 block of Hobart Place, NW).

For more information, visit the Web site for the District's clean city initiative at www.cleancity.dc.gov or contact the Department of Public Work's Helping Hands Program, which is helping to plan community cleanup efforts, at (202) 645-7190. To find out what is scheduled in your neighborhood, consult the Clean City Events Calendar or call the Office of the Clean City Coordinator at (202) 671-1403.

See a Piece of History: Visit *Amistad*

From March 23 through April 7, the District welcomes the Freedom Schooner *Amistad*, which is docked at the Southwest Waterfront at 7th and Water Streets, SW. In a celebration of history, reconciliation and racial harmony, the *Amistad* Host Committee in conjunction with the DC government, will offer two weeks of multi-cultural events and activities.

Amistad is a replica of the Spanish coastal cargo schooner *La Amistad*, which was used in 1839 to ship 53 stolen West Africans sold into the transatlantic slave trade from one side of Havana, Cuba to the other. This plan was thwarted when three days into the journey, a 25-year-old Mende rice farmer named Sengbe Pieh, led his people in mutiny against their captors and eventually took command of the vessel. After 63 days, *La Amistad* and her African "cargo" were seized as salvage by the US Naval Revenue Cutter *USS Washington* near Long Island, New York, and towed to Connecticut's New London harbor. Transported to and held in a New Haven jail, the Africans were charged with murder. This 1839 "incident" took on historic proportions when former President John Quincy Adams argued and won the case for the defense in 1841. The *Amistad* Incident of 1839 is said to be the first civil rights case argued in the American court system.

The DC Lottery is sponsoring an *Amistad* Essay and Poster Contest, open to all DC public school students, grades 4 through 12. Students who visit or research the *Amistad* and wish to enter the contest are asked to express their experience in an essay or by producing a poster. The entries of 60 finalists will go to the DC Lottery for final judging. Riggs Bank has graciously provided 18 US Savings Bonds as prizes. Essays and posters are due by Friday, April 26. For more information, contact Bob Hainey or Gwen Cleveland at the DC Lottery Communications Division at (202) 645-7900.

For a complete list of *Amistad* activities and public tours visit www.spiritofenterprize.org/amistad.dc.



LINK TO OTHER WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

District Activities



Mayor Williams and Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato celebrate the opening of the National Cherry Blossom Festival at the Kennedy Center on March 24.



Mayor Williams and Chief Few join firefighters and emergency service personnel who were rewarded with the Mayor's meritorious service awards.



Mayor Williams joins Don King and Dick Gregory in congratulating civil rights pioneer Dorothy Height on her 90th birthday.



Mayor Williams presents a proclamation from the city to Bill Pinkey, captain of the Amistad, a model of La Amistad, a ship used to transport African slaves in the 1800's. The Amistad is docked at 7th and Water Streets, SW through April 7.

Community News

- [District's Proposed FY 2003 Budget Released](#)
- [Mayor Signs Statement of Support for the National Guard and Reserve](#)
- [Groundbreaking Takes Place At Elderly Housing Site](#)

[Click here](#) to view releases.

Upcoming Events

03/30	Kickoff for Great American Cleanup 2900 Block of Georgia Avenue, NW (between the 600 block of Columbia Road, NW and 600 block of Hobart Place, NW) 9:30 am
04/09	Ward One Citizen Update Meeting on Emergency Preparedness Marie Reed Community Learning Center 2200 Champlain Street, NW 7:00 pm
04/10	Upper Northwest Community Group Rudolph Elementary School 5200 Second Street, NW 7:30 pm
04/16	Hillcrest Civic Association Meeting Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter 3319 Alabama Road, SE 11:30 am - 12:00 pm
04/29	Ward Six Citizen Update Meeting on Emergency Preparedness Miner Elementary School 601 15th Street, NE 7:00 pm

[Click here](#) to view Mayor's daily schedule.

